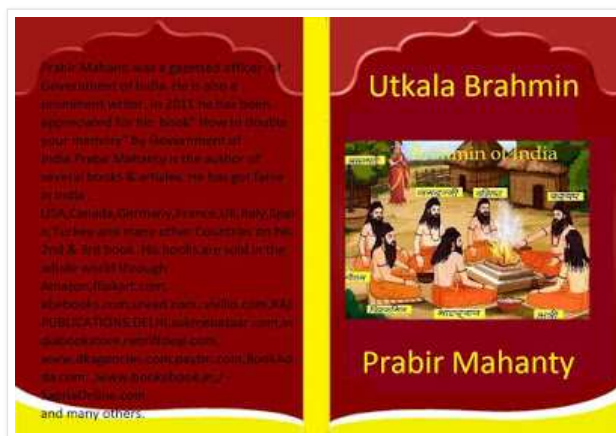




Monday, 21 April 2008

Utkala Brahmin : उत्कल ब्राह्मण



UTKAL BRAHMAN:-

[Utkal Brahmins/Brahman: - Research & Encyclopedia.](#)

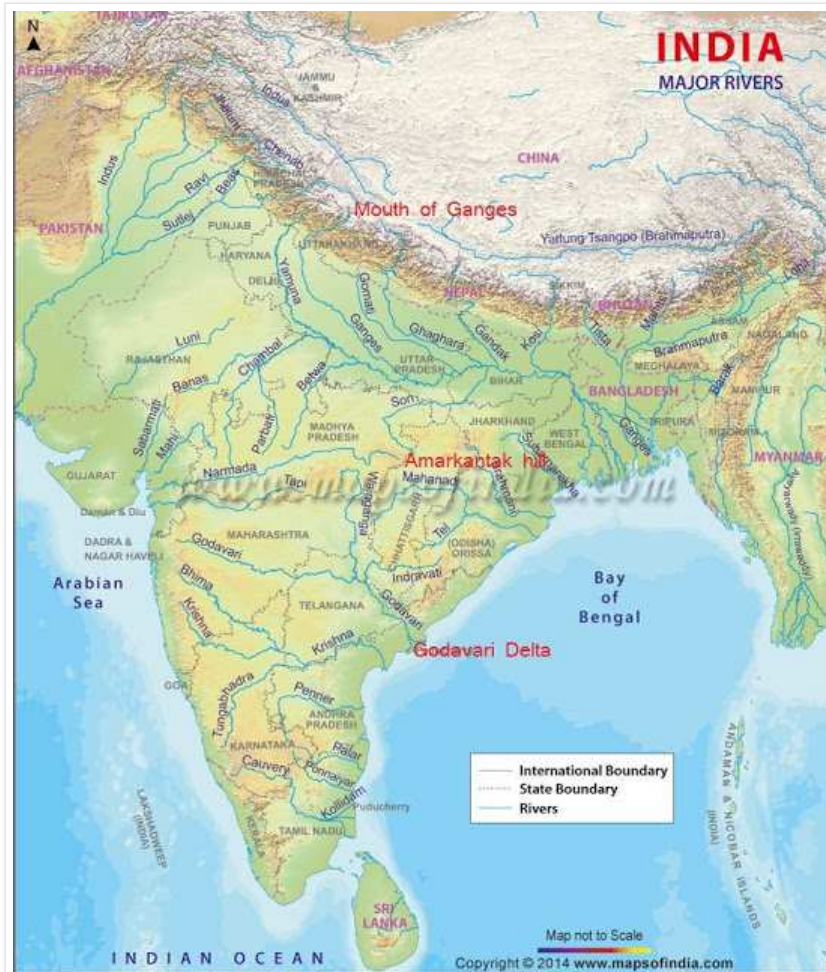
Utkal means that are best in art and those who were Brahman by caste and best in art were known as Utkala Brahman. Now Utkala Brahmins are found in Odisha and its neighboring states border like, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand and other part of India and abroad.

Background:-

The Utkala Kingdom was located in the eastern portion of the modern-day Indian state of Odisha. This kingdom was mentioned in the epic Mahabharata, with the names Utkala, Odra Desha, Oddiyana and Okkali. The name of Utkal is mentioned in the Puranas, Epics and different religious text book. According to Skanda Purana, the land of Utkala is the holy land in Bharata Varsha where Purusottama Kshetra is situated. The Utkala Kingdom was also known as Kalinga, Kangoda, Odra Desha, Mahakantara, Dakhina Koshala, Danda Bhukti, Uddisa Subah etc, in different time period. Suryavanshi emperor of Orissa Gajapati Kapilendra Dev renamed his kingdom from Utkala to Orissa Rastra.

It is pertinent to mention here that the boundary of Greater Utkala region was from mouth of river Ganges in the north to

river Godavari in the south and Amarkantak hills in the west to Bay of Bengal in the east and its focal point was Utkala kingdom.



History of Utkala Brahmins/Brahman:-

In India there are four abodes of God widely known as Char Dham. Char Dham as defined in modern days are the names of four pilgrimage sites in India that are widely revered by Hindus. It comprises **Badrinath, Rameswaram, Dwarka and Puri**. It is considered highly sacred by Hindus to visit Char Dham during one's lifetime. These destinations are spread across four different directions of the country – Badrinath Dham is located in the north, Rameswaram in the south, Dwarka in the west and Puri in the east. Jagannath Dham Puri is located in the state of Odisha. The entire monarch of Odisha were devotee of lord Jagannath, they invited Brahmans from various part of India and dedicated the ritualistic responsibility of Jagannath temple and other temples of erstwhile Odisha. All the monarchs of Odisha and their feudatories and also Queens constructed temples, roads, Ghats, tanks and established settlement for Brahmans with tax-free home & land and

agricultural holdings. Due to this reason Odisha was one of the favorite destinations of Brahman community of India.

The Sailodbhava dynasty (6th - 7th century AD) rulers made arrangements for the study of Vedic wisdom and an Ashwamedha sacrifice(यज्ञ) was performed by King Madhab Barman in 7th century he invited Brahmans from Gangetic Valley for performing a yajna(यज्ञ) when the yajna(यज्ञ) ended the invited Brahmans settled there. In the time of Keshari rulers, Shaivism gained importance. In 9th century Utkala adhipati Yajati Keshari, to preserve the sanctity & purity of Brahmanism, brought 10,000 Brahmans from Gangetic valley and Kannauj and settled them in his capital Yajati Nagar or Yajna pura(modern day Jajpur). The Jajpur area was once famous for organizing Somayajna, Shrauta karma. It's a famous site for the performance of ancestral rites, known as Nabhi Gaya.

Elite Brahmans were brought by Sri Anangabhim Dev III,kings of Eastern Ganga dynasty in 1230 A.D from Kanyakubja , Ujjain and dedicated the ritualistic responsibility of Jagannath temple and some other temples .The king bestowed them with land and other endowments for living a dignified life. They were settled at some villages near Jagannath temple & in and around Puri district; such Brahman villages were called 'Sasanas. Sasan villages were autonomous community with revenue, judiciary and law and orders. Each such village had a kotha comparable to a trust board and Mahajan mela comparable to Gramsabha of the modern days/in the present day. Due to withdrawal of royal patronage and some other reasons some of these Brahmans later migrated to various other parts of present day Odisha and its neighbouring states. Some were settled in ex - Princely states being invited by Rajas of those states.Many Utkala Brahmans also migrated to present day lower Bengal/ Bangladesh.

Eastern Ganga dynasty (1078–1434 AD) brought more number of Brahmans from all over North India, especially from **Kannauj** (presently in **Kannauj district of Uttar Pradesh**)**Ujjain** (Ujjain is an ancient city located in the bank of Shipra river in the state of **Madhya Pradesh**) and **Ahichchhatra** .(Ahichchhatra or Ahi-Kshetra (**अहिच्छत्र**) was the ancient capital of Northern Panchala, a northern Indian kingdom mentioned in Mahabharata present-day Ramnagar village of **Bareilly** district of **Uttar Pradesh**). As Orissa then Utkala grew to an affluent kingdom, many Brahmans of Godavari delta region also migrated to settle in Mahanadi basin. Many Brahmans like Mishra, , Chaturvedi, Tripathy, , Dwivedi, Trivedi, Upadhyaya, Sharma,Joshi along with some Mahant from **Kashi**, Hastigram, Takari of Magadha (**Bihar**) and upper Gangetic plain (**West Uttarpradesh & Uttarakhand**) also

migrated to coastal districts of Odisha from time to time. Six categories of duties were assigned to them- study(अध्ययन), teaching(अध्यापन), performing Yagna(यज्ञ) and help in organising Yagna(यज्ञ), donate and to receive the donation. Several Brahman villages were established by the Surya Vamsi king of Orissa, Gajapapati Kapilendra, in the 15th century A. D. Each village devoted to a hundred Brahman families with adequate tax free land.

*It is pertinent to mention here not only Utkal Brahmins migrated to Odisha various other people from other community who had ability in their field migrated to Odisha at times.

Origin of Utkal Brahman:-

Utkala Brahmins are consisting of various Brahmins who were considered one of the best among Brahmin community of India to preserve the sanctity & purity of Brahminism and matter related with, who later grouped under Utkala Brahmins.

Utkala Brahmins is a part of Pancha-Gaur Brahmins. Utkal Brahmins were brought by kings of Utkal / Kalinga / dynasty from various part of India at times as they were considered one of the best among Brahmin community of India to preserve the sanctity & purity of Brahminism. Kapila Purana says

वर्षाणां भारत श्रेष्ठ देशानां उत्कल स्मृतः उत्कलस्य समदेशोः देशोः नास्ति महीतले ॥



Utkal Brahmin occupy 9% of the total Oriya Speaking population of Odisha, beside this neighbouring states border districts Utkal Brahmin occupy considerable percentage of the total population of district.

Utkala Brahmins are responsible for priestly and related functions at the Jagannath Temple in Puri also known as Jagannath Puri, where Lord of the Universe Shri Jagannath deity is installed and it is one of the four holiest religious places of Hindus and other temples in erstwhile Odisha rulers and their feudatories. They are responsible for priestly functions of other religious places of the state of Odisha and of neighbouring states.

Mukti Mandap of Jagannath temple, the seat of learned Utkala Brahmins.

Mukti Mandap (the platform for salvation or congregation hall of the holy seat of selected learned Brahmins) is situated at the southern side of the Jagannath temple of Puri. Sankaracharya of Govardhana matha is the permanent president of Mukti Mandap. He is entitled to sit on Mukti Mandap on Asan or floor mats which is not allowed to any other person.

Ramchandra Dev, the first king of Bhoi Dynasty installed as Raja of Khurda is said to have renovated the Mukti Mandap with 16 pillars. He recognised 16 Brahman villages (Known as Shohala Sasan Village) and the learned and leader Brahmins of those villages seat in the Mukti Mandap.

Kashyapa gotri Nanda, Bachchas (बच्चस), Bhatta Mishra and Goutamatreya gotra- Brahmins were taken as the Rajguru of Gajapati kings and they were allowed to sit on the Mukti mandap to adjudicate inter caste and inter village disputes and other matter

Composition of Utkala Brahmin/Brahman:-

Utkala Brahmins is a part of Pancha-Gaur Brahmins and it is consisting of Various Brahmins like Saraswatas, Kanyakubjas , Goudas etc. It is pertinent to mention here, Panch-Gaur and Panch-Dravida are two chief divisions of Brahmins, as per the shloka from Rajatarangini of Kalhan / Kalhana:-

कर्णाटकाश्च तैलङ्गा द्राविडा महाराष्ट्रकाः ।
गुर्जराश्चेति पञ्चैव द्राविडा विन्ध्यदक्षिणे ॥
सारस्वताः कान्यकुब्जा गौडा उत्कलमैथिलाः ।
पञ्चगौडा इति ख्याता विन्ध्यस्योत्तरवासिनः ॥

Translation: The Karnatakascha, Tailangas, Dravidas, Maharashtra and Gujjars, these five types who live south of Vindhya mountains are called "five Dravidas" Brahmins. The five Dravidian Brahmins are as under.

1. [Gurjara \(Gujarati Brahmins\)](#)
2. [Maharashtraka \(Maharashtrian Brahmins\)](#)
3. [Karnataka \(Kannada Brahmins\)](#)
4. [Talianga \(Telugu Brahmins\)](#)
5. [Dravidian \(Brahmins of Tamil Nadu and Kerala\)](#)

The Saraswatas, Kanyakubj , Goudas, Utkalas, and Maithili, who live north of Vindhya mountains are known as "five Gour" Brahmins. The five Gaur or Gaud Brahmins are as under.

1. [Gaud Brahmins](#)
2. [Kanyakubja Brahmins](#)
3. [Maithil Brahmins](#)

4. Utkal Brahmins (consisting of various Brahmins)

5. Saraswat Brahmins (Who lives near Saraswati river, including Gaud Saraswat Brahmins, who have migrated to the south of Vindhya).

Genetics of Utkala Brahmin:-

In the phylogenetic tree, the Utkala Brahmins showed close affinity to populations of North India.

Classification of Utkala Brahmins:-

The Utkala Brahmins are of three classes

- Shrauta/Vedic (श्रौत/वैदिक ब्राह्मण) Brahmanas.
- Sevayata/Purohita (सेवायत/पुजारी ब्राह्मण) Brahmins.
- Halua Brahmin (हलुआ ब्राह्मण) (Agrarian Brahmins.)

Again there are sub-classes in these three classes:

1."Shrauta/Vedic (श्रौत/वैदिक ब्राह्मण) Brahmins":-

The Vedic Brahmins are those who follow Vedic rule & regulation. They are the ancient Brahmins and interpreters and teachers of Vedas & author of Vedic other religious books. They are called Shrauta Brahmins as they teach Vedas. (The teachings of Veda by eminent rishis are called sutras). They do Yajna ("yaj" which means to worship), Yajana, Adhyayana, Adhyapana, Daana, Pratigraha. They are also known as Kulina Brahmins. They give more importance to Veda, daily Upasana and agnihotra. Only this group of Brahmins have right to conduct Yagyas.



Sub classes:

A) Kalinga Shrauta Brahmins:-

The Brahmins who have come from undivided regions of previous Dhenkanal, Sambalpur, Cuttack, Puri and Ganjam. They stay south of Brahmani River. They marry among themselves. Other Brahmins avoid to marry them.

B) Jajpuria Shrauta Brahmins:- The sub-class which has come from Jajpur and north Odisha area. They stay north of Brahmani River. First they settled in areas around Baitarani River.

These above two sub-classes are eligible to perform Shrauta rites, they abstain from doing temple services and they seldom intermarry with other Brahmins.

2." Sevayata/Purohita (सेवायत/पुजारी ब्राह्मण) Brahmin" :-

They are also known as Sevaka, Sarua, Purohit or Pushpalak Brahmins; they follow the Karmakanda and sometimes act as priests for social as well for some temple functions. They give more importance to temple worship, and priesthood.



They don't have right to organise Yagya. They can read Veda and teach it. Some of them follow Agama also. The Sevayata (पुजारी ब्राह्मण) sections of Brahmins are divided into three sub-classes which are as follows

A) Devalaka(Deyulia)Brahmins:-

[Surnames:- Badapanda, Pujapanda etc]. Their main occupation is the service of the temple Gods and Goddess. Many of them expertise in Vedic Karmakanda(rites for marriage, upanayan etc) as well as temple worship. Most of the Daitapati sevayatas of Jagannath Temple, Puri and Lingaraj Temple belong to this sub class. Most of the temple in Orissa have this sub class of Brahmins as chief priests..They marry among themselves.Others Brahmins avoid to marry them.

b) **Paniyari(Panda)Brahmins:-** [Surnames - Panda]. They are also from the priestly section, some do rites and some do temple services, some of them are cooks in temples and even in religious organizations, and some travel all around India for pilgrims to visit the temples of Jagannath/Narayan. Some of them are engaged in business and trade of Agricultural products. They have high percentage of population among all Utkala Brahmins. They have power to populate very fast and spread everywhere.

c) **Jhadua(Aranyaka)Brahmins:-** [Surnames - Dash].They are also known as Panchadesi Brahmins.They constitute good number of population of Utkala Brahmins in odisha and its neighbouring states. They are the Brahman of Kannauj of (Uttar Pradesh) north India

3. "Halua Brahman (Agrarian Brahmins) (हलुआ ब्राह्मण)

[Surnames: - Thakur,Naik,GramPradhan or Pradhan,Choudhury,Samantray,Sabat,Dalbehera etc].

That who cultivates in their own field and agriculture is their main occupations are called Halua. Those who are halua by occupation and Brahman by caste are called Halua Brahman.



Halua Brahmins are similar to Bhumihaar of Bihar & UP and Niyogis of Andhra Pradesh. They are also known as Balaram gotri or Mahasthana Brahmins. History says, Haluas were the village leaders, administrators of Brahmin ancestry. Once they enjoyed same status as above Brahmins but later they accepted vocational jobs for livelihood and gave up their sacred duty of Shrauta and Smriti. They are engaged in agriculture & business. Some of them are allowed to do Shraadh and associate in temples and religious functions. Most of them are business- oriented, also do cultivation of lands granted during Eastern Ganga dynasty and they are found in and around South Odisha. Many of them migrated to neighboring state of Odisha and other country. There is also a significant migrant population of Haluas in Mauritius, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and some other countries.

Gotra of Utkala Brahmins:-

The full affiliation of a Brahmin consists of (1) **Gotra**, (2) **sutra** (vedanga/Kalpa), (3) **Shakha**, (4) **Pravara**.

Gotra:-

The Saptarishis are the main Gotra of Utkala Brahmin. The concept of Gotra was the first attempt among the Brahmins to categorize themselves among different groups. At the beginning, these Brahmins recognized themselves by the names of various rishis like, Kashyapa Bhardwaj, Angirasa, Atri, Gautam, Bhrigu, Vasistha and Kutsa. It is to be noted that Vishwamitra was initially a Kshatriya king, who later chose and rose to become an ascetic rishi. Hence the gotra was applied to the grouping, stemming from one of these rishis as his descendants. Many lines of descent from the major rishis were later grouped separately. Accordingly, the major gotras were divided into Ganas (subdivisions) and each gana was further divided into groups of families. The term gotra was then frequently started being applied to the ganas and to the sub-ganas. Every Brahmin claims to be a direct patrilineal

descendant of one of the founding rishis of a certain gana or sub-gana. It is the gana or sub-gana that is now commonly referred to as Gotra. Over the years, the number of gotras increased due to descendants of original rishi also started new family lineage or new gotras by inter marriage with other sub-groups of the same caste, and inspired by another rishi whose name they bear as their own gotra. Gotra & Pravara parampara are followed in families of Utkala Brahmans. During Upnayan, Vivaha, Sandhya vandana and other ceremonies it is revered. Utkala Brahmans avoid marriages with family of same gotra and pravara. Different gotras trace to original seven Sapta Rishis, It is pertinent to mention here that the names of the current saptarishi are Kashyapa, Atri, Vashista, Vishvamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni and Bharadwaja. The Saptarishis keep changing for every Yuga. As per Hindu Shastras, there are four yugas: Sat / Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. We are at present in the Kali Yuga, which will last for 432,000 years ([we are in 5109 year now in 2018](#)); Dvapara Yuga is twice Kali Yuga, Treta Yuga is thrice Kali Yuga and Krita/satya Yuga is four times Kali Yuga.



Gotra of Utkala Brahmans

Sutra:-

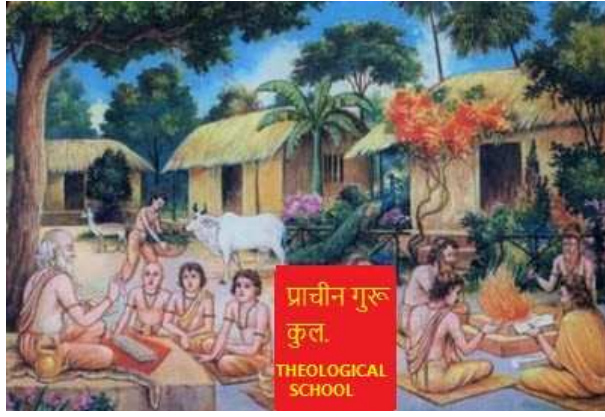
The teachings of Veda by eminent rishis are called sutras. Every Veda has its own sutras. The sutras that deal with social, moral and legal principles are called Dharma sutras. The sutras that deal with ceremonials are called Sruta sutras. The sutras that deal with domestic rituals are called Grihya sutras. The sutras of different shakha people are as under:-

- Rigveda: Ashwalayana Shrauta and Grihya Sutra (Shakal Shakha)
- Shukla Yajurveda: Katyayana Shrauta and Paraskara Grihya (Kaanva Shakha)
- Samaveda: Drahyayana Shrauta and Gobhilya grihya (Kauthuma Shakha)
- Atharvaveda: Vaitana Shrauta and Kaushika grihya (Paippalada Shakha).

Shakha of Utkala Brahmans:-

Shakha (Sanskrit Shakha means "branch" or "limb"), is a Hindu theological school that specialises in learning certain

Vedic texts/traditional texts followed by such a school.



Brahmans were divided into several Sakhas or branches, based on interpretations and implementation/adoption of Vedas by theological school. An individual follower of a particular school is called a Sakhin. The vaidika shakha may vary family to family in all of the above Shrotriyas (श्रौत/वैदिक ब्राह्मण) and Sevayatas (पुजारी ब्राह्मण).

Majority of them follow Kaanva Shakha (काण्व शाखा) of Shukla Yajurveda or Kauthum shakha (कौथुमी शाखा) of Samaveda. Whereas Brahman belonging Shakala shakha (शाकल शाखा) of Rigveda and Paippalad shakha (पिप्पलाद शाखा) of Atharvaveda and Madhyandina shaka (माध्यन्दिन शाखा) of Shukla Yajurveda are less. It is thought that the existence of Rigveda Brahman is due to Govardhan matha of Adi Shankaracharya (Adi Shankara).

The Paippalad Shakha (पिप्पलाद शाखा) of Atharvaveda (अथर्ववेद) found in Odisha trace their origin from Narmada basin, it is generally assumed that they migrated during Eastern Ganga Dynasty. Many Brahman having surname Upadhyaya and Acharya have Paippalada shaakha as their family Shakha.

Pravara of Utkala Brahman:-

In Brahman Hindu culture, a Pravara (Pravara means best Rishi- श्रेष्ठ ऋषि) is a particular Brahman's descent from a rishi (sage) who belonged to their gotra (clan - वंश). In every gotra there were some rishis who were best in their gotras.

Gotra Related Pravaras of Utkala and other Brahman are as follows

1. Kashyapa:- Kashyapa, Aavatsara, Daivala
2. Gautam:- Angiras, Aayasyasa, Gautam
3. Bharadwaja:- Angiras, Barhaspatya, Bharadwaja
4. Vatsa/Srivatsa:- Bhargava, Chyavana, Apnavana/Apnuvat, Aurava, Jamadagnya
5. Atreya/Krishnatreya:- Atreya, Aarchanaasa, Syaavaasva
6. Kaushika:- Vaiswamitra, Aghamarshana, Koushika
7. Kutsa/Kauchhasa:- Aangirasa, Maandhatra, Koutssa
8. Shandilya;- (2 Variations/Types)
 1. Kasyapa(2nd), Aavatsara, Sandilya
 2. Kasyapa (2nd), Daivala, Asitha
9. Gargyasa/Gargi;- (2 Variations/Types)
 1. Angirasa, Bharhaspatya, Bharadwaja, Sainya, Gargya
 2. Angirasa, Sainya, Gaargya
10. Sunkriti ;-(2 Variations/Types)

1. Angirasa, Kowraavidha, Saankritya
 2. Sadhya, Kowraavidha, Saankritya
 11. Harita/Haritasya:-(2 Variations/Types)
 1. Harita, Ambarisha, Yuvanasva
 2. Angirasa, Ambarisha, Yuvanasva
 12. Kowndinya:-Vashishta , Maitraavaruna, Kowndinya
 13. Kapinjala:-Vashishta, Aindrapramada, Abharadvasavya.
 14. Paraasara:-Vashishta, Saaktya, Paarasarya.
 15. Moudgalya:- (3 Variations/Types).
 1. Angirasa, Bharmyasva, Mowdgalya
 2. Tarkshya, Bharmyasva, Mowdgalya
 3. Angirasa, Dhavya, Mowdgalya
 16. Aagastya:- Aagastya, Tardhachyuta, Sowmavaha
 17. Kanava:- (2 variation).
 1. Angirasa, Ajameedia, Kanva.
 2. Angirasa, Kowra, Kanav
 18. Naitruva Kashyapa:- Naitruva, Kashyapa, Avatsara
 19. Viswamitra:- Viswamitra, Devbrata, Owtala
 20. Suryadhaja:-
 - Bharadwaj, Lakhi (Mehrisi), Soral, Binju, Angirasa.
- Other gotras which are rare are Dalabhya, Uddalaka, Katyayana, Upamanyu, Yaska, Barhishena, etc.

Opinion of Pandit Narayana Shiromani:- An expert of Brahmanism(late 18th century):-

According to Pandit Narayana Shiromani, the gotra decides the surname. He mentioned that Gautama gotra should have surname Dhara Sharma, Bharadwaja gotra should have Kar Sharma, Kashyapa gotra people should keep Nanda or Ananda Sharma, Atreya gotra people should keep Rath Sharma, Kaushika and Vatsa gotra have Dash Sharma.

*These above gotra Brahmins are considered as topmost among Utkal Brahmins.

Nomenclature(नामपद्धति) of Utkal Brahmins:-

The name of Utkal Brahmins men should be auspicious (शुभ/मंगलसूचक/सौभाग्यशाली). The second part and surname of a Brahmin's name should be indicating happiness (आनन्द खुशी/प्रसन्नता सूचक). The names of Utkal Brahmins women should be pleasing and auspicious (शुभ) easy to pronounce, should not be imply anything inauspicious(अशुभ, भयानक)Negative, (नकारात्मक/ अभावात्मक). Name of Utkal Brahmin should not be disreputable and connected with power, wealth.

Rule of Upanayan of Utkal Brahmins:-

Upanayana (उपनयन) is one of the traditional rites of path of Utkal Brahmins that clear the acceptance of a student by a Guru.

(उपनयन' का अर्थ है वह संस्कार जिसके द्वारा बालक आचार्य के

पास ले जाया जाता है) A sacred thread, called Yagnopavitam or Janeu is placed around the left shoulder of the boy during Upanayan. It is also considered to be one of the most important and pious ones for Utkal Brahmin. The three sacred threads (Yagnopavitam or Janeu) signify the three Goddesses. The sacred thread is made up of nine fibers, each fiber signifies as Omkar, Vishvadevata (deity of the universe), Agni (deity of fire), Vayu (deity of air), Som (deity of moon), Prajapati (deity of procreation), Nag (serpent), Pitar (ancestors), Yama (deity of death). Bachelors should wear sacred threads with 3 strands. Married men should wear sacred threads with 6 strands. Men whose parents have passed away should wear sacred threads with 9 strands.

Upanayan should accomplish in between 8-11 years of age. According to Apastamba Gryha Sutra, maximum age limit of Upanayana is 24 years. However, Gautama Gryha Sutra and other ancient texts state that there is no age limit and anyone of any age can undertake Upanayanam, when they feel they should start their formal studies of the Vedas. During Upanayan Vedic Brahmin wear white Dhoti, whereas pujari Brahmins and others wear red color Dhoti.

Marriage rules of Utkala Brahmins:-

There are two kinds of Pravara in Utkal Brahmins.

1. Guru – **Sishya- Rishi Parampara.**

2. Pita- **Putra- Rishi Parampara.**

When it is Guru sishya-rishi-parampara and half or more than half of the rishis are same in both bride and grooms pravara/gotras then marriage is not acceptable. If it is Pita Putra-Rishi- parampara and only one rishi matches in bride and grooms pravara/gotra then marriage is Strictly restricted/ unacceptable .

Festivals of Utkala Brahmins/Brahmins:-

The main festival of the Utkala Brahmins are Rath Yatra, Janmashtami Radhashtami (राधाष्टमी) .Dol purnima, Durga Puja, Laxmi Puja, Saraswati Puja, Deepavali, Makar Sankranti, Chaitra sankranti, Shivaratri, Kalipuja, beside this Sitala Sasthi , Nabanna, Jhulan Yatra, Upanayan, Mahalaya, Rama Navami, Panchami, Shashthi and Puda (प्रौढाष्टमी), Bipadtarini, etc are observed with utmost religious sanctity .Utkala Brahmin families regularly worship Lakshmi and Narayan at home or Mandir and Shiv Puja at Shiv Mandir. Sandhya-arati at home and Mandir with Shankha is also a regular practice.

It is relevant to mention here - Religious function is a tool to

find out the roots of any community. It is said Shi Radha was born at Barsana (बरसाना) now is a town and a nagar panchayat in the Mathura district of the state of Uttar Pradesh .Utkal Brahmins whose family roots were at Barsana (बरसाना) and its adjacent area, they are still Radhey-Radhey chanters and they celebrate Radhastami (राधाष्टमी) with utmost religious sanctity. Similarly Utkal Brahmins whose family roots were in Ujjain they celebrate Maha Shivaratri with utmost religious sanctity. Some shakta Utkala Brahmins trace their origin from this region and some from Mithilanchal.

Food habits of Utkala Brahmins :-

It is of two types

- Lacto vegetarianism
- Pasco vegetarianism

Utkala Brahmins are vegetarians (शाकाहारी). A few (Shrotriyas/वैदिक) Utkala Brahmins are still strict lacto vegetarians who abandon garlic, onion and some varieties of gourds and Masoor dal, apart from non-vegetarian food. Many Utkala Brahmins are Pasco vegetarians, which show the close influence of Shaktism(सर्वशक्तिमान देवी को माना जाता है). Shakta Utkala Brahmins eat fish and sacrificial mutton, still chicken is considered taboo by many .Most of the Utkala Brahmins share the common foods and show fondness to sweets and Pithas like Kheer,khakra, Gargaria, chena sheetal etc



It is pertinent to mention here the **famous white rasgulla** have been introduced by Utkal Brahman community who are still residing in West Bengal & Odisha. During British rule some poor Utkal Brahmans from Bankura, Purulia, Midnapur, Hoogly district of West Bengal and Odisha were employed in Bengali homes and restaurant of Kolkata as cook and **introduced Rasgulla in Kolkata**.



Rasagalla/Rasogolla/Rasgulla

Activities that are forbidden to Utkal Brahmans.

According to the Manu smriti making weapons, butchering animals, making or selling poisons, trapping wildlife and other jobs associated with death are forbidden to Brahmans.

The Surnames and title (उपाधि) of Utkal Brahmin/Brahman:-

Surnames and titles or decorations used along with the proper names commonly added at the end of the names - are either genealogical or professional. The genealogical surname have been in use from generation to generation and are generally family names some of which may even have been personal names. Professional names have also been adapted as family names and are regularly used as surnames. It has been a practice for quite a few centuries to award titles to persons who occupy positions of distinction in intelligence, learning, wealth, honour etc. Persons who have rendered meritorious service to the country have also been awarded titles which have gone down from generation to generation and thus got absorbed as family names or surnames. Indian history from pre-Mughal days has shown that the ruling Hindu Kings had awarded titles on persons and families for either meritorious service to the country or for leadership in society. This practice has been followed by the Pathan and the Mughal rulers and by their successors, the British as well. Even in independent India the Presidential awards on the Republic day is a continuation of the old practice of honouring persons for their service to the country.

Title:- Many professional titles were given to utkala Brahmans according to their profession or work. These titles were given to the Utkal Brahmans either by King or by their feudatory kings as punishment or reward. In course of time this title became the surname, and the subsequent generations inherited it like who were associated with Deekshya (दीक्षा) is called Dikshit. Praharraj-king of one prahar (3hrs) etc.

According to Pandit Narayana Shiromani, the gotra decides the surname like Kashyapa gotra people should keep Nanda or Ananda Sharma. Kaushika and Vatsa gotra should keep Dash Sharma.

Surname of Utkal Brahmin/Brahman in India:-

There are numerous surname of Utkal Brahmins. The main surname of Utkala Brahmins are Nanda, Mahanti/Mahanty, Kar Sharma(Kar), Dash Sharma (Dash), Mishra, Pathak, Acharya, Chaturvedi, Tripathy, Tiwary, Bhatt, Rajguru, Patra, Mahapatra, Rath Sharma(Rath), Sarangi, Chaini, Dwivedi, Dubey, Goswami, Joshi, Nayak, Panda, Mallia, Praharaj, Padhi, Pani, Purohit, Pujari, Pati, Satapathy, Bakshi, Hota, Singha Chaudhary, Singha babu/Sinha babu, Singha Mahapatra, Nath etc, beside this many other Surname of Utkal Brahmins are found in India.

It is pertinent to mention here that all Odia Brahmins are not Utkal Brahman similarly all Utkal Brahmins are not Oriya Brahman.

Ambiguity on surname of Utkal Brahmins:-

There are many surnames of Utkal Brahmins that cuts across caste lines and were given on work basis by kings in recognition of work in their respective field. For example:-

Mohanty(मोहंती) /Mahanty (महंती) Surname.

Mahanty /Mahanti/Mohanty is a surname mostly found in Odisha, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and rarely found in other part of India and abroad. The derivation of Mohanty /Mahanti/Mahanty is derived from Sanskrit word Mahan means great, in the historical context the title of Mohanty/Mahanty is awarded by the king without prejudice of caste to those who had vast knowledge about administration, who had vast knowledge about King's court and who did act of valour etc. In view of above reason Mohanty /Mahanti/Mahanty surname are found in Brahman, Karana (It's a sect of Utkal Brahmins predominantly found in Indian state of Odisha, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh) Kayastha and other caste and due to this reason among Mahanti/Mahanty/Mohanti/Mohanty surname gotra, pravara, sutra, sakhas are different. It is pertinent to mention here generally Brahmins use word Mahanty/Mahanti(महंती) in their surname where as Kayastha and others use word Mohanty/Mohanti(मोहंती) in their surname.

Mahapatra Surname: -

(महापात्र शब्द का शाब्दिक अर्थ महान+पात्र, अर्थात् वैसा पात्र (मनुष्य) जो अपने गुण, छवि और पांडित्य से महान है). It is one of the few surnames that cuts across caste lines and was ordained on work basis. A family received the title Mohapatra /Mahapatra by kings in recognition of work in their respective vocations due to this reason Mahapatra/Mohapatra surname is also found in Brahman & other caste. Generally Brahmins use word Mahapatra in their surname where as others use word Mohapatra in their surname. Patra, Dandapat, Dash/Das, Nayek, Layek, Nath, ray and many other surname of Utkal Brahman community are also found in Brahman and other caste.

It is pertinent to mention here recently it has been observed, some educated and elite Utkal Brahmans are now adopting their gotra as their Surname like Kashyap, Bhargava, Bharadwaj Gautam, Atri/atriya, Kaushik etc.

Utkal Brahman in West Bengal/Bengal.

During the reign of Gajapati empire (1434 to 1541 AD) the Utkal Brahmans were migrated to Bankura, Purulia, Medinipur district of West Bengal as representative of the Gajapati King and under leadership of Nakurtung and his spiritual guide Sripati Mahapatra, at that time these areas were under the monarch of Utkal (Odisha) and its name was Dandabhukti (दंडभुक्ति). Dandabhukti was an ancient and medieval province spread across what are now Bankura, some part of Purulia, Hooghly, West and East Medinipur districts in the Indian state of West Bengal and Balasore or Baleswar district in the Indian state of Odisha. Dandabhukti was broadly the territory between river Dwarakeswar and river Subarnarekha.

According to some Utkal Brahman of West Bengal:-

In 1568 Muslim general Kalapahad attacked Odisha and defeated Gajapati king Mukunda dev and conquered major towns and religious places of Odisha including Cuttack, Jajpur, Sambalpur, Konark, Puri etc. It alleged that he forcefully converted thousands of Hindus into Muslims and terrorised the Hindus by destroying many temples and Hindu deities. Due to this reason many people migrated to various other part of Odisha and its neighbouring state. During this time many Utkal Brahman were migrated from Odisha and settled in Bankura, Medinipur, Purulia districts of Indian state of West Bengal.

Now Utkal Brahmans occupy considerable percentage of the total population of Bankura, Purulia, East Medinipur, West Medinipur districts in the Indian state of West Bengal.

Surnames of Utkal Brahmins in West Bengal.

The surname of Utkal Brahmins found in west Bengal are as under:- Mahapatra, Mahanty, Mishra, Singhababu, Singhamahapatra/Sinhama hapatra, Satapathi, Sannigrahi, Sangiri, Sarangi, Chaini, Das/Dash, Das Chakravarty, Dandapat, Dubey, Tripathi, Tewary/Tiwary, Kar, Hota, Goswami, Nath, Patra, Pathak, Panda, Pati, Praharaj, Pyne, Pani, Pahari, Nayak, Layek, Roy etc.

Origin of Mahanty/Mahanti surname in West Bengal:-

It is pertinent to mention here about Mahanti/Mahanty who are living in West Bengal and its adjacent area are kashyap gotri Nanda previously known as Nanda /anand Sharma and they were taken as Rajguru of various kings. According to Utkal Brahmin historians Bhim Nanda and Lal Nanda were two brother and rajguru & feudatory, they resisted the attack of Maratha (Bhonsle king (भोंसले)- Maratha king of Nagpur) from 1740-1742. During this time King of Panchakot give them new Surname Mahanty/Mahanti. Later on descendants of Bhim Nanda/Mahanty were settled at Jhar bagda, Hitasi and Hirbandh area of Bengal and descendants of Lal Nanda/Mahanty were settled at Barabhum now under Indian state of west Bengal and Singbhum now under Indian state of

Jharkhand. In course of time the title Mahanti/Mahanty became the surname of their descendants. Later on offspring/descendants of Bhim Mahanty and Lal Mahanty were married to the Princes of Simlapal (previously known as Gaur) and Bhelaidiha and the king of Simlapal (Mahapatra dynasty) and Bhelaidiha settled their son in laws and daughters at Jorisha and Nutangarh and as a result of this Mahanty/Mahanti community spread in Simlapal and its adjacent area in the Indian state of West Bengal.

Utkal Brahman & India's Changing Demography:-

India is one of the most populous countries in the world. More than one sixth of the world's population is living in India. Its population will be 1.6 billion by 2050. Its population growth rate is 1.2%. India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. The Republic of India is now considered as one of the possible emerging superpowers of the world. According to Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) one of the UK's leading economics consultancies, Indian economy will advance to fifth place by 2018 and it will advance to third place by 2027. On the other hand India is projected to overtake China as the world's most populous nation by 2030. India's population growth has raised concerns that it may lead to widespread unemployment and political instability.

Now the question arise, Utkal Brahman community which is a part of this demography, how much it will get or loose from this demographical changes. If we see the pattern of demographical changes of Utkal Brahman community, we will find that negative growth is increasing day by day with enhancing human capital development. In every democracy Population play a major role. Now all most every political party wants to win election at any cost, election winning has been their main aim. Communities which have maximum and more united and skilled population will get more benefit. So time has come to think in this regard, as there are serious challenges ahead in the form of caste and creed ratio and the possible rise in social and political unrest and conflicts.



Famous Utkala Brahmins:-

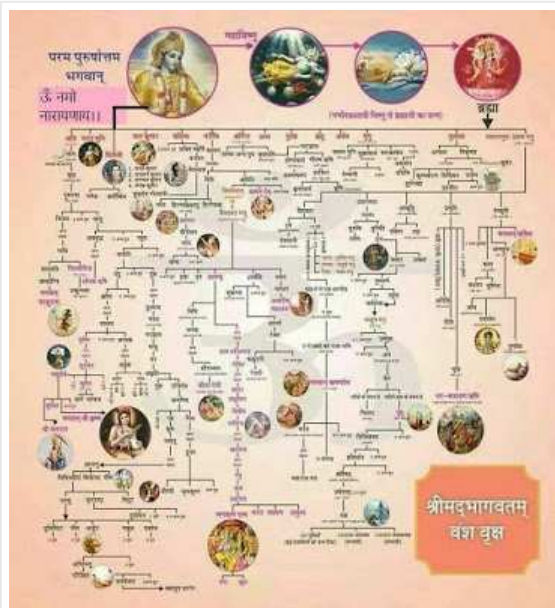
1. The great poet Jayadeva(जयदेव)

Famous Sanskrit scholar, poet of 10th century and author of Gitagovinda.

2. Govardhan Acharya:-Sanskrit scholar of 12th century.

3. Udayan Acharya : Sanskrit scholar of 12th century.
4. Vishwanath Kaviraj: Sanskrit scholar of 13th century.
5. **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu(चैतन्य महाप्रभु)**
(1486-1535): Also known as Gouranga, Nimai, Viswambhara, was a great Vaishnava saint of Bhakti era of medieval India. Gaudiya Vaishnava is based on his philosophy. Having family roots to Jajpur, Odisha, from where his ancestor migrated to Bengal. He was contemporary of last Suryavamsi emperor of Odisha, Gajapati Prataprudra. He spent his last 24 years of life in Puri, Odisha.
6. Jagannatha Dash(1490-1550):-A great scholar of Sanskrit and Oriya language. His unique creation 'Srimad Bhagabata' in Oriya is one of the pioneering piece of Oriya literature.
7. Pandit Gangadhar Mishra. He was court poet of Maharaja Baliar Singh(1660-1690 AD) of Sambalpur Kingdom. He was reputed for his work Kosalanandakavyam. In this poem the post medieval social and cultural condition of Sambalpur along with rest of Odisha are reflected.
8. Justice Ranganath Misra - 21st chief Justice of India. 1st Chairman of National Human Right commission.
9. Justice Dipak Misra- 45th & present Chief Justice of India.

Reminiscence of Utkala Brahmins by means of Picture:-



नीलाचलनिवासाय नित्याय परमात्मने. बलभद्रसुभद्राभ्यां जगन्नाथाय ते नमः

Jagannath temple & Mukti Mandap of Jagannath temple, the seat of Utkala Brahmins:



Jagannath temple (pic-courtesy history file.co.uk)



Gajapati Palace





Ruins of Palace-Garh Panchakot-courtesy Bodhisatta



Sun Temple was constructed in 1255 CE by King Narasimhadeva 1 of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty



Lingaraja Temple:- हरी ओम नमः शिवाय



Palace of Mahapatra Dynasty founded by Sripati Mahapatra at Simlapal, West Bengal.



Baitarani river witness ups & downs of Utkala Brahman community



Brahmani river witness ups & downs of Utkala Brahman community

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and pravaras together their real and mythological histories)

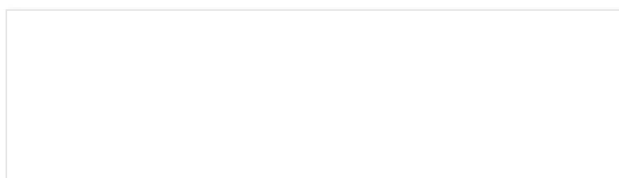
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ABOUT PRABIR:-



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